News Release
Communiqué

Ontario

Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

Ministère de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée

For Immediate Release
February 23, 2007
2007/nr-035

MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT IMPROVING HOSPITAL SERVICES IN EXETER

$1 Million Investment To Increase Patient Access To The Emergency Department

EXETER - The McGuinty government is improving access to health services for Exeter-area residents by supporting renovations at the South Huron Hospital Association Emergency Department, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

"Our investment today will help the hospital upgrade its emergency department so patients will have more access to quality care," said Smitherman.

The government's $1 million investment will go towards the renovation of approximately 6,400 sq. ft. of the existing facility. The renovation will focus on improving the efficiency, safety, and comfort of the hospital's emergency care by:

- Modernizing and reorganizing the emergency department to improve patient flow
- Improving health and safety standards
- Upgrading ventilation systems.

The McGuinty government also provided $139,700 in operating funding to the South Huron Hospital Association to assist with their operations of the Emergency Department. This investment was part of the government's $142.4 million Emergency Department Action Plan, which was announced in October 2006 to assist with increased capacity in hospitals' emergency rooms. The funding was provided for:

- Recruitment and retention of emergency room physicians, physician assistants and nurse practitioners to emergency rooms
- Reducing emergency room waiting times and improve working conditions for frontline health care workers, and
- Supporting community-based services and providing more services in the community.

"We are pleased with the government's support for our redevelopment plans," said Ms. Debra Hunt, Chief Executive Officer of the South Huron Hospital Association. "This funding is another step towards upgrading and modernizing the hospital."

"Our government has a vision of a health care system that is going to help keep Ontarians healthier, get them good care when they are sick, and be there for them for generations to come," said Carol Mitchell, MPP for Huron-Bruce. "Today's announcement is another step towards making that vision a reality here in Exeter and rural Ontario."

Other initiatives by the McGuinty government benefiting the health of Ontarians include:

- Increasing operating funding to provincial hospitals to $12.9 billion in 2006/07, growing to $14 billion in 2008/09

- Reducing wait times for five key health care services (hip and knee joint replacement, cataract surgeries, MRI exams, cancer surgeries and cardiac procedures) with a recent investment of $222.5 million
- Increasing medical school enrollment by 23 percent and funding long-term care homes to hire 682 new nurses.

Today's initiative is part of the McGuinty government's plan for innovation in public health care, building a system that delivers on three priorities - keeping Ontarians healthy, reducing wait times and providing better access to doctors and nurses.

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